AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

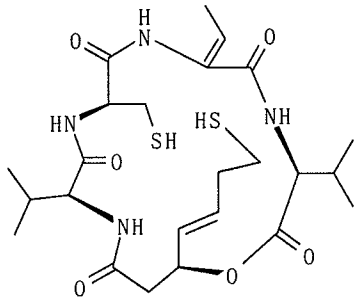
1. -15. **(canceled)**

16. **(currently amended)**: A method for treating articular cartilage extracellular matrix degradation in ~~arthrosteitis, rheumatic arthritis, or~~ osteoarthritis, which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of a histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound to a patient in need thereof.

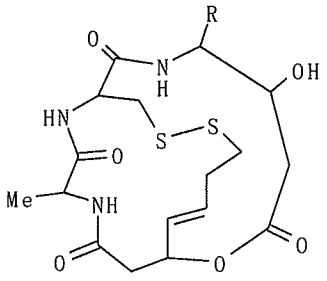
17. **(canceled)**:

18. **(previously presented)**: A method for treating arthrosteitis, rheumatic arthritis, or osteoarthritis caused by articular cartilage extracellular matrix degradation, which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of a histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound to a patient in need thereof.

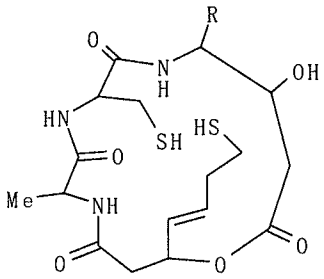
19. **(new)**: The method according to claim 18, wherein the histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound is selected from FK228, MS-27-275, Trichostatin A, NVP-LAQ824, SAHA, Apicidin, Phenylbutyrate, Valproic acid, Pivaloyloxymethyl butyrate, CI-994, Depudecin, Trapoxin, a CHAP, butyric acid and a depsipeptide compound represented by the following formula (I), a depsipeptide compound represented by the following general formula (II), and a depsipeptide compound represented by the following general formula (IIa):



(I)



(II)



(IIa)

wherein R represents an isopropyl group, a sec-butyl group, or an isobutyl group.

20. **(new)**: The method according to claim 19, wherein the histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound is selected from FK228, the depsipeptide compound represented by formula (I), the depsipeptide compound represented by formula (II), the depsipeptide compound represented by formula (IIa), MS-27-275, Trichostatin A, NVP-LAQ824, SAHA, Apicidin, Phenylbutyrate, and Valproic acid.

21. **(new)**: The method according to claim 18, wherein the histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound is a compound whose histone deacetylase inhibitory activity (IC_{50} value) is a concentration of 100 μM or less measured by a histone deacetylase inhibition assay comprising:

(a) pre-incubating the histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound with [^{3}H] acetyl-histones in a solution containing PTT for 1 hour at room temperature,

(b) adding histone deacetylase to the solution of step (a) and incubating at room temperature for 2 hours, and

(c) measuring the released [^{3}H].